



Partnerships in Bloom

Students and schools; communities and local governments; business and professional groups: each offers the District an opportunity to join forces to more effectively manage and protect the region’s water resources. Together we are sowing the seeds of education and civic responsibility, and of mutual understanding and respect. We are widening our horizons and sharpening our shared perspectives. Read about a few of the partnerships that flowered over the past few months.



Artist's rendering of Kissimmee River exhibit.

A RIVER RAN THROUGH IT!

The natural wonder of nature mending itself became part of the magic greeting guests to this spring’s 2003 Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival, open from April 25 through June 8 in Orlando. That wonder is the restoration of the Kissimmee River.

Amid the more traditional blossoms and greenery of the annual Flower and Garden Festival, Disney World’s guests learned about Kissimmee River restoration. It was the theme for the Children’s Garden and other informational displays.

Visitors to the garden walked a meandering blue path mimicking the twists and turns of the restored river, weaving

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM LINKS DIVERSE CULTURES WITH FLORIDA’S WATER RESOURCES

June and July were intensely busy months for 24 summer interns at the South Florida Water Management District. Twelve college students and 12 high school students took part in separate programs offering “real world” work experiences as well as modest earnings.

The District matched each intern with a supervisor who directed them throughout their internship. Most of the college students attend, or recently graduated from, four historical black colleges and universities around the country. Seven are native to Egypt, Nigeria, Venezuela, Ghana, the French West Indies and the Bahamas. Each enhanced their college majors in science or computer fields by working on projects related to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

The college students were also mentors for the high school interns, who were chosen from the Palm Beach County area. They spent their six weeks at the District helping to update databases, mail out publications, or gather scientific data in the field.

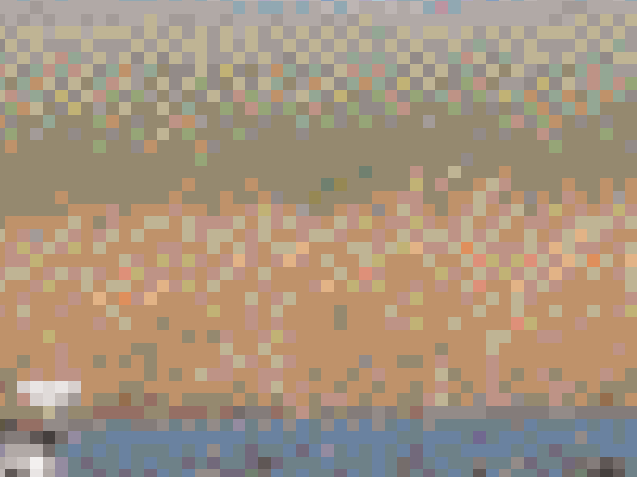
“I would like to thank everyone from the District who has taken time out of their busy schedules to teach us valuable insights on the job, as well as in our lives. We want you to know how much it means that you believe in us. Thanks for your faith and patience in making winners of us



Summer interns gather around board Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas (front center).

all and the opportunity of letting us train with you,” said Melissa Guerrero, a student from Sun Coast High School who spoke for all the interns in an address to the Governing Board in July.

“We met our primary goal: providing minority students with a better appreciation and understanding of our water resources, and their link to the future of our resources,” Governing Board Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas said. “We hope to have opportunities to open the partnership program to other organizations and students next year,” Brooks-Thomas concluded.



NAACP CONVENTION EXPERIENCES THE EVERGLADES

Miami Beach was the host of the 94th Annual Convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held July 12-17. The South Florida Water Management District took the opportunity to communicate its message to almost ten thousand people who attended a Commerce and Industry bonanza at the conference. The District hosted an exhibitl inviting them to “Celebrate America’s Everglades.”

Huge, colorful scenic displays of the Everglades with poetry from Maya Angelou and writings from the Grand Dame of the Everlades, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, made an impressive splash. The District also partnered with the Carrie Meek Foundation and Parrot Jungle to sponsor a reception that brought together NAACP leaders, District Governing Board Chair Nicolás Gutiérrez, Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas, Board member Irela Bagué, Executive Director Henry Dean and District senior management.

Workshops and meetings offered diverse topics, and a variety of chances for District representatives to create and strengthen relationships with the many communities represented. National and local press covered speeches by the Reverend Jesse Jackson, civil rights leader and NAACP Chairman of the Board Julian Bond, President/CEO Kweisi Mfume, and civil rights activist Myrlie Evers-Williams.

The theme of the conference was “Having Our Say,” and thousands of participants from across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean did just that.

GO WILD AT PARROT JUNGLE!

What do you get when you cross an alligator with a parrot? A snappy and colorful exhibit at the new Parrot Jungle Island in Miami! When you venture here, you will meet Pépe the Parrot and walk through Freddy the Alligator’s new Everglades Habitat.



The Everglades boardwalk at Parrot Jungle.

On May 28, with the mark of an X and a claw print, Freddy and Pépe officially signed the public-private partnership agreement between the District and Parrot Jungle Island for the creation of this Everglades Habitat. On hand for the ceremony were District Governing Board Chair Nicolás Gutiérrez, Governing Board Member Irela Bagué, and Executive Director Henry Dean.

Miami-Dade elected and community leaders participating in the event included Dade County Commissioners Bruno Barreiro and Jose “Pépe” Díaz, and City of Miami Chief of Staff François Illas.

The Everglades Habitat brings the unique ecosystem known as the River of Grass to a destination where many more of Florida’s visitors and residents can experience it up-close.

Communication Links Communities

As the Vice-Chair of the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board, I believe that it is incumbent upon this agency to ensure that the region's diverse communities are informed and involved concerning water management decisions. Strong partnerships with other governments, community leaders and groups, as well as professional and civic organizations, are vital to helping us get our message out about how our efforts impact central and south Florida residents and businesses.



"I have worked diligently with staff to expand District outreach and partnership efforts into our 16 counties."

—PAMELA BROOKS-THOMAS
GOVERNING BOARD VICE-CHAIR

I have worked diligently with staff to expand District outreach and partnership efforts into our 16 counties, and with state and national organizations. Those efforts are beginning to pay off. I am happy to report that more informal meetings and forums are being held in the local community on key topics such as Everglades restoration. In addition, the foundation has been laid for greater networking opportunities with businesses and organizations in order to get information into the hands of their members.

By personally participating in holiday parades and community events, as well as promoting District involvement in state and national conferences, my goal is to demonstrate the District's commitment to a stronger, more accessible presence with our varied and diverse publics. I believe that the best, most effective relationships must be built upon

trust and open communication. And because today's youth are tomorrow's decision-makers, it is imperative that we support educational and mentoring opportunities.

Being the Governing Board member from Broward County, I am especially proud of the positive progress we have made in my home county. Michael Jackson, the director of our local service center, and his staff have made tremendous strides in coordinating intergovernmental and community outreach efforts. The District has numerous long-term mission-related initiatives under way in the county that must be effectively communicated and addressed in order to be mutually beneficial and successful from both the regional and local perspectives.

Both Michael and I have made it a priority to meet with area state legislators as well as the mayor, city manager and public utility director of Broward municipalities to discuss issues of mutual concern.

In addition, the full District Governing Board periodically holds joint meetings with the Broward County Commission, and the District's Water Resources Advisory Commission held its February meeting in Fort Lauderdale with an agenda devoted to Broward-related issues.

My fellow Governing Board members and I look to this advisory group to provide us with recommendations and input on critical resource management

issues, including Everglades restoration and water supply planning. I was able to ensure Broward County representation on this diverse, broad-interest commission by recommending two of the members: Al Calloway of Opportunities Industrialization Centers of South Florida, Inc., provides insight on economic and environmental justice concerns and shares my belief in the importance of citizen involvement. Also, Broward County Commissioner Kristin Jacobs lends her valuable government experience and expertise to our advisory commission deliberations. Long a proponent of water conservation and Xeriscape landscaping as a proven resource management tool, the District is happy to partner with Commissioner Jacobs and the County's Water Matters public education campaign.

In support of the first interagency Water Matters outreach event in May, more than 1,500 Broward County residents came to Tree Top Park to learn about environmentally-friendly landscaping, water conservation and backyard wildlife habitats.

While I am proud of the expanded efforts the District has made to actively engage more and more of our communities and organizations in water management matters, I will continue to pursue additional opportunities to build on these collaborative and beneficial partnerships.

District Leadership Update

"I am pleased to announce some key management changes to benefit the agency and the public that we serve," said Executive Director Henry Dean. Carol Wehle, formerly head of the Greater West Coast Department, now serves as Assistant Executive Director. She is responsible for day-to-day operations, issue management and agency-wide strategic planning. Sheryl Wood has been named General Counsel for the District. She has worked at the agency for 14 years, serving as Deputy General Counsel since 1999. She is responsible for providing leadership and guidance to the agency's Office of Counsel. John Williams was appointed by the Governing Board to serve as District Ombudsman. A veteran water resource attorney, he brings nearly 25 years of experience to this facilitator and problem-solving role, including 19 years with the St. Johns River Water Management District.



Carol Wehle
Assistant Executive Director



Sheryl Wood
General Counsel



John Williams
Ombudsman

If You Build It...

To build what may be the world's largest public works project, it takes companies of all types and sizes, with many kinds of expertise. When the District needed a reliable, experienced earth-moving company to build a 1.3 mile-long limerock berm in the middle of one of our Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs), the Jones Company of South Florida responded with a low bid and a high determination to do the best job possible.

"This minority firm was a real go-getter and was eager to demonstrate their capabilities," said Chip Merriam, Deputy Executive



Jones Company owners, Lance and Angela Jones at the job site.

Director for Water Resources. "We were very pleased with their professionalism and dedication to completing the work under budget and ahead of schedule."

This project is just one of many that demonstrates the District's commitment to increasing the participation of MBE firms.

STAs are a critical component of the District's on-going efforts to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the Everglades. To enhance the performance of these constructed wetlands, the District is conducting a variety of scientific and engineering demonstration projects with variations in how the areas are managed. When a small-scale application proves promising and warrants further investigation, the District moves forward with a full-scale version. This adaptive management approach allows the District to constantly adjust and fine-tune the technologies being used in order to accelerate progress in meeting water quality mandates.

Scientists speculated that the use of a berm to subdivide STA treatment cells would help redistribute

water flow – allowing more time for plant uptake of the excess nutrients – and would likely improve the overall phosphorus removal performance of the STA.

To put this concept into action, the District applied to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant to fund construction of the full-scale demonstration project.

The Jones Company, a local firm based in Lauderhill, submitted the low bid and confidently took on the task of building the 6,900-foot long, 2.5-foot high berm in Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West, located in central Palm Beach County. More than 21,000 tons of limerock were trucked in and placed during the operation. While the contract allowed for a five-month construction schedule, the work was completed within four months.

"We are glad to have the opportunity to work with the District on this project and it is exciting for us to be a participant in efforts to save the Everglades," said Angela Jones, company president.

Everglades Trail: Hit the Road!

You won't have to lace up hiking boots, don a backpack, slap on bug repellent, or even buy a ticket – to navigate the Everglades Trail. Just get in your car or truck and hit the road! The Everglades

Trail is an audio auto tour that follows the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem as it winds south down the Florida peninsula.

Stops along the way highlight sites of interest with informative narratives by Charles Osgood of CBS news, as well as interviews with Senator Bob Graham, who has been a long-time supporter of the project. The rich folklore and historical accounts along the path where the "River of Grass" once flowed is available on CD with an accompanying map and brochure. An additional CD features the music of Jimmy Buffett.

An ecotourism video featuring the Everglades Trail aired on the Sunshine Network five times for one month, from June 3 through July 2. Produced by Three Star Productions and Wilderness Graphics of Tallahassee, the 30-minute show takes the viewer to various destinations along the Everglades Trail.

The District was instrumental in shooting footage for the video, and editing the final product. Executive Director Henry Dean is featured in an interview.

Numerous resource agencies dovetailed

their efforts so the Everglades Trail could become a reality. They include:

- National Park Service
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Rookery Bay National Estuarine Reserve
- Florida State Parks Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- South Florida Water Management District

The Everglades Trail (www.evergladestrail.org) will introduce millions of visitors to the "inside story" of a unique ecosystem. Brochures, donated by Wilderness Graphics, will be available free from VISIT Florida and also located at all the Everglades Trail sites. Rack cards will be available at Welcome Centers. The CDs will be on sale at bookstores throughout central and southern Florida.

CREDITS	
WaterMatters is produced by the South Florida Water Management District's Department of Public Information to inform the public about District projects and programs. An internet version is also available in English and Spanish at www.sfwmd.gov	
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The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply.

Year 1, Issue 6

NOW AVAILABLE!

WaterWise Landscaping Guide
Our new plant guide includes landscaping tips and extensive listings of plants to help you create landscapes that save water and are environmentally friendly.

Everglades Poster
Produced for Earth Day 2003, this poster celebrates the winged wildlife of the Everglades.

For copies of these free materials, call (800) 432-2045 ext. 6883 or visit our web site (www.sfwmd.gov).

Who is Freddy?

His full name is "Freddy the Friendly Alligator." He is the South Florida Water Management District's mascot.

You may have seen him on the signs that mark the region's canals and rivers.

Alligators dig deep holes in the swamp where they "hang out." When drought strikes, these "gator holes" provide water and food (fish, turtles, insects) for many other species such as wading birds. At the same time, any creature sharing the alligator's territory could become its lunch! That's why people should remember that alligators are wild animals which should be admired, but also avoided.

Question selected from District letters and emails received from the public.

My kids have seen you in area parades and events, and on canal signs, and they think you are very cute! How do I get a picture of you for them?

Thank you! I always enjoy seeing families at the events where I get to be a guest. They seem to like me here, too, because they have my face on a bunch of things that children might enjoy. I look a bit more muscular in my latest portraits, because I've been working out! There's a sticker of me that some kids seem to like. It has conservation tips on the back, which you'll need to peel off to stick on books or bicycles or whatever. I'm also often featured in coloring sheets and educational materials (I'm much younger there).

To get copies of any of these materials, just call the District's Department of Public Information. Call toll free in Florida (800) 432-2045, or (561) 682-6883; or check out our web site (www.sfwmd.gov).

Canals Connect Us!

Broward waterways link people and environment

When most people think of Broward County, they picture sunny beaches, big boats and densely developed cities and suburban areas dotted with homes, shopping centers and golf courses. Few realize that just beyond the bustling cities' westernmost levee lies much of the remnant Everglades, a vast wetland ecosystem that encompasses more than 75% of the county's total land area. A series of canals and waterways connects these man-made and natural habitats.

Effective partnerships among the South Florida Water Management District, the county, city governments, local water control districts and community groups help ensure that the county retains both its natural values and its allure as a popular destination.

WATER SUPPLY PLANNING

District staff work closely with the County in support of its leadership role in developing and implementing the Broward County Integrated Water Resource Plan (IWRP). This critical

program takes a comprehensive view – exclusive of municipality or service area boundaries – of existing and proposed water supply needs and sources. The



In portions of Broward County, the Sawgrass Expressway separates the county's western-most developments from the Everglades.

goal is to increase the efficiency and utilization of local rainfall and infrastructure in order to reduce dependency on regional supplies and to help minimize future water shortages. Broward has been recognized by the National Association of Counties for its achievements in this innovative planning arena.

IMPROVING FLOOD CONTROL

South Florida's wet season started early this year, bringing unusually heavy rains to Fort Lauderdale, Oakland Park, Margate and North Lauderdale in late May. The District and local governments quickly assessed the problem areas and mobilized the needed equipment to lessen the impact of these early, torrential storms. Communication and coordination are key to responding to these emergency situations.

To provide a regional perspective on drainage issues in western Broward County, the C-11 Basin Consortium includes local elected officials, local water control districts, interested citizens and the District. Over the past two years, the Consortium successfully acquired \$350,000 to study the basin and identify problem areas. The funds are being used for a pump study, to install monitoring telemetry and to develop a model of Southern Broward County. The results from these studies will be used in conjunction with data provided by the

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